THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR): (a) to (c) Crude oil production in the country during the years 2002-03, 2003-04 and 2004-05 was 33.05, 33.37 and 34.04 Million Metric Tonne (MMT) respectively. It may thus be seen that there has been a marginal increase in the production of crude oil during the past 3 years. Moreover, several important steps have been taken to increase oil production to meet the domestic requirements. These include the following:—

(i) improving the recovery factor from existing major fields by implementing Enhanced Oil Recovery (EOR)/Improved Oil Recovery (IOR) schemes; in particular, Oil and Natural Gas Corporation Ltd. (ONGC) have taken up 15 fields for this purpose at an estimated investment of Rs. 10,972 crore, which would also help in accelerating oil production from these fields;

(ii) increasing exploration efforts through the new Exploration Licensing Policy (NELP); Under the four rounds of NELP, Production Sharing Contracts (PSCs) have been signed for 90 blocks. The Fifth Round of NELP has been declared open as of 4 January, 2005 to invite bids for 20 exploration blocks; The bids close on 31 May, 2005.

(iii) exploring new areas, especially deep waters and difficult frontier areas, as also the deeper layers of already producing fields;

(iv) developing newly discovered fields speedily and stepping up the use of new technologies for seismic surveys, work over, stimulation operations, drilling of wells etc. in producing areas; and

(v) acquiring acreages abroad.

Investments in Russian energy sector

2887. SHRI GIREESH KUMAR SANGHI:

DR. T. SUBBARAMI REDDY:

Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Russian Government has approved the modalities for the merger between the State-owned oil company and the natural gas

monopoly, Gazprom, which would remove hurdles on the way to Indian investment in the Russian energy sector;

(b) whether any final decision between India and Russia has been reached; and

(c) if so, the details of the agreement reached and by when, it is likely to be implemented?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR): (a) The modalities of merger between Rosneft, the State-owned oil company and Gazprom are not known to the public at this point of time.

(b) No, Sir.

(c) Does not arise in view of (b) above.

ONGC'S projects in Russia

2888. SHRMATI SUKHBUNS KAURRI:
DR. AKHILESH DAS:

Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether ONGC has agreed with Russia to undertake expolrations and exploitations in respect of 11 oil and gas projects in that country including Yuganskneftgas former Yukos core asset;

(b) if so, the details of the basket of discovered fields and producing property in question; and

(c) the terms of the agreement and the benefits that are likely to accrue to India thereby?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR): (a) and (b) ONGC Videsh Limited (OVL) and Rosneft are already partners in the Sakhalin-I project in Russia, in which OVL has 20% stake.

Further discussions about possible areas of collaboration have been held at Ministerial, official and commercial level on this subject, and